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ROSETTE OR DOUBLE BLOSSOM OF BLACKBERRIES, RUBUS SP.

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This disease caused by Cercosporella rubi (Wint.) Plak., was first reported from Illinois about 1884. Since then it has been found to be generally distributed throughout southeastern and southern United States but has not been reported from the Far West. The disease is very destructive to blackberries and dewberries in these regions. It occurs in erect and trailing blackberries, both cultivated and wild. In Florida the "Brazos" variety is commonly attacked by this fungus.

SYMPTOMS. Rosette or double blossom is recognized by the rosette effect resulting from the abnormal production of multiple short, bunchy shoots (Fig. 1). The foliage of this witches-broom is lighter in color than on normal shoots and may turn to a yellow or bronze color later. In severe cases, all the buds on the cane may be affected, but usually only some of the lateral branches are resetted. The diseased shoots may be entirely vegetative or may produce more than the usual number of blossoms. These affected blossoms are elongated with the sepals extending as leaflike structures above the swollen lower part of the bud. The petals are longer and a deeper pink than in healthy blossoms and frequently fail to unfold. The diseased flowers usually fail to produce fruit, but when formed, it is abnormal.

Fig. 1. Infected cane showing bunching and rosetting.

CONTROL. After harvest, canes should be cut back to ground level and burned. Some of the modern fungicides could possibly provide good control of this fungus; but there is not enough experimental evidence at the present time to make a firm recommendation.

References

Anderson, H. W. 1956. Diseases of fruit crops. McGraw-Hill Book Co. New York; 501 p.

Shoemaker, J. S., and R. M. Davis. 1966. Blackberry production in Florida. University of Florida. Agricultural Extension Service Circular 294; 20p.